

Yesterday, the Department of the Interior reversed its prior stance on offshore drilling and [announced](#) that it will NOT open areas in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and along the Atlantic seaboard for offshore oil and gas production until 2017 at the earliest. These areas are the exact regions that President Obama included as part of a “[comprehensive strategy](#)” for increasing offshore energy development that he released just 9 months ago. Far from pursuing a comprehensive strategy, today’s announcement represents a failure to respond to our need for more domestic energy production.

This year’s oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was a widespread tragedy that greatly impacted the Gulf Coast region and took the lives of eleven fellow Americans. There is no question that BP and the other parties responsible for this accident must be held fully accountable for restoring the affected areas and compensating those individuals and business owners who were negatively impacted. That said, we cannot afford to allow this episode to drive “knee-jerk” policies that restrict our ability to responsibly develop our domestic oil and gas resources. The Administration’s latest announcement represents yet another flawed policy response to the Gulf of Mexico incident that will leave our nation more dependent on foreign oil and make it more difficult to increase our nation’s energy supplies and keep energy prices low for American families and businesses. Yesterday’s unjustified reversal on offshore energy policy is also another missed opportunity to put Americans to work and help get our economy back on the right track.

As oil prices currently remain nearly twice what they were when President Obama took office, I will continue to do all I can to encourage his Administration to take action and allow for the responsible development of our abundant offshore oil and gas resources.